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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/220,830 12/24/98 SISSON

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EXAMINER

TM02/0426

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ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2161
DATE MAILED:

04/26/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/220,830

Applicant(s)

SISSON ET AL.

Examiner

Thomas A. Dixon

Art Unit

2161

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 August 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

The following title is suggested:

Method and Apparatus for the Remote Inspection of Postage Meters.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 6 is objected to because of the following informalities:
the phrase starting with "is one of a..." should end with the final entry referenced in the alternative "or".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

3. Claim 1, 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Eddy et al (5,812,400).

As per claim 1.

Eddy et al (5,812,400) discloses:

generating a code at a data center, the code being associated with the postage metering system, see column 17, lines 32 – 40,
creating a challenge card having the code therein, see column 17, lines 37-40,

Art Unit: 2161

sending the challenge card via a carrier service to the specific location, see column 17, lines 37-40,

retrieving the code from the challenge card and entering the code into the postage metering system subsequent to the receipt of the code at the specific location, see column 17, line 36,

communicating the code retrieved from the challenge card from the postage meter to the data center, see column 17, lines 52-56,

comparing the code received at the data center from the postage metering system to the code generated at the data center to verify that the postage metering system is physically located at the specific location, see column 17, line 56 – column 18, line 17.

As per claim 2.

Eddy et al ('400) discloses all the limitations of claim 1.

Eddy et al ('400) further discloses the card is a printed card, see column 17, lines 37-40.

As per claim 8.

Eddy et al (5,812,400) discloses:

means for accounting for value dispensed in a metering system, and internal and external smart card vaults, see figure 1 (10, 8, 26);

a challenge card having the code therein associated with an identification of the accounting means, the challenge card received from a carrier service, see column 17, lines 37-40,

means for entering the code from the challenge card and entering the code into the postage metering system, see column 17, line 36,

means for communicating the code retrieved from the challenge card from the postage meter to the data center, see column 17, lines 52-56.

As per claim 9.

Eddy et al (5,812,400) discloses:

generating a code at a data center, the code being associated with the postage metering system, see column 17, lines 32 – 40,

creating a challenge card having the code therein, see column 17, lines 37-40,

sending the challenge card via a carrier service to the specific location, see column 17, lines 37-40,

retrieving the code from the challenge card and entering the code into the postage metering system subsequent to the receipt of the code at the specific location, see column 17, line 36,

communicating the code retrieved from the challenge card from the postage meter to the data center, see column 17, lines 52-56,

comparing the code received at the data center from the postage metering system to the code generated at the data center to verify that the postage metering

Art Unit: 2161

system is physically located at the specific location, see column 17, line 56 – column 18, line 17.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 2-4, 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eddy et al (5,812,400) in view of Dolan et al (5,731,980).

As per claim 2.

Eddy et al ('400) discloses all the limitations of claim 1.

Eddy et al ('400) further discloses the transfer of packed postal codes, see column 18, lines 1-17, and internal and external smart card use, see figure 1 (10, 8, 26).

Eddy et al ('400) does not explicitly disclose the codes are cryptographically secured.

Dolan et al ('980) teaches cryptographic communication between a host and a postage meter, see column 10, lines 6-29, and inspection cards, see column 14, lines 16-30 for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to cryptographically secure the codes of Eddy et al ('400) within the cryptographic communication taught by Dolan et al ('980) for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

As per claim 3.

Eddy et al ('400) in view of Dolan et al ('980) discloses all the limitations of claim

2.

Eddy et al ('400) further discloses the transfer of packed postal codes, see column 18, lines 1-17, and internal and external smart card use, see figure 1 (10, 8, 26).

Eddy et al ('400) does not explicitly disclose the code is cryptographically secured using secret key cryptography.

Dolan et al ('980) teaches multiple types of cryptography in use with postal metering systems, see column 14, line 60 – Column 15, line 33, including digital tokens, RSA and Digital Signatures which use DES encryption, any of which are seen as equivalents to the recited secret key encryption, for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to cryptographically secure the codes of Eddy et al ('400) with secret key cryptography or any of the cryptographic methods taught by Dolan et al ('980) for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

As per claim 4.

Eddy et al ('400) in view of Dolan et al ('980) discloses all the limitations of claim

3.

Eddy et al ('400) further discloses the transfer of packed postal codes, see column 18, lines 1-17, and internal and external smart card use, see figure 1 (10, 8, 26).

Eddy et al ('400) does not explicitly disclose the code received from the card is decrypted to verify its authenticity.

Dolan et al ('980) teaches authenticating digital tokens and multiple types of cryptography in use with postal metering systems, see column 14, line 60 – Column 15, line 33, including digital tokens, RSA and Digital Signatures which use DES encryption, for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Eddy et al ('400) to decrypt the cryptographically secure codes as taught by Dolan et al ('980) for the benefit of increased security in a postal metering system.

As per claim 6.

Eddy et al ('400) discloses all the limitations of claim 1.

Eddy et al ('400) further discloses the transfer of inspection data at refills or zero amount refills, see column 18, lines 58-65, and internal and external smart card use, see figure 1 (10, 8, 26).

Eddy et al ('400) does not explicitly disclose the card is a smart card.

Art Unit: 2161

Dolan et al ('980) teaches internal and external smart cards used in postage meters for refilling, see column 9, line 65 – Column 10, line 29 for the benefit of entering data into and retrieving data from a postage metering system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Eddy et al ('400) to use the external smart cards taught by Dolan et al ('980) for the benefit of increased user convenience.

As per claim 7.

6. Eddy et al ('400) in view of Dolan et al ('980) discloses all the limitations of claim

Eddy et al ('400) does not explicitly disclose the code is electronically entered from the card.

Dolan et al ('980) teaches internal and external smart cards used in postage meters and communication between the cards and the meters, see column 9, line 65 – Column 10, line 29 for the benefit of entering data into and retrieving data from a postage metering system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Eddy et al ('400) to communicate the code electronically from the external smart cards taught by Dolan et al ('980) for the benefit of increased user convenience in not having to enter the code manually.

Prior Art made of Record

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Taylor (4,812,965) teaches the periodic mailing of inspection cards.

Gravell et al (5,943,568) discloses location checking using Caller ID.

French et al (5,799,093) teaches remote inspection of a postage meter.

French et al (6,050,486) teaches smart cards used as inspection cards.

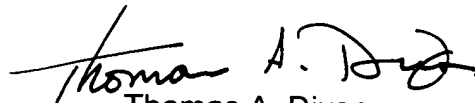
Art Unit: 2161

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas A. Dixon whose telephone number is (703) 305-4645. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 7 - 3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trammell can be reached on (703) 305-9768. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-9051 for regular communications and (703) 308-9051 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-9700.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas A. Dixon", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas A. Dixon
Examiner
Art Unit 2161

April 20, 2001